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CHILE: Another Day of National Protest

Chile's fourth day of national protest tomorrow will indicate whether President Pinochet's continuance in office is becoming the key political issue, and it will set the tone for opposition activities on the 10th anniversary of the overthrow of President Allende next month.

The protest, which was called by a broad range of opposition forces, is to include commercial and transport boycotts, street rallies, and other nonviolent activities. Previous protests were aimed generally at a faster return to democracy, but several opposition spokesmen have announced that this demonstration will call specifically for Pinochet's resignation.

This demand is a key provision of a declaration negotiated in recent weeks by the Christian Democrats and other opposition groups. Their manifesto also calls for a plebiscite to approve the calling of a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution, the creation of a transition government, and an emergency economic plan to revive the economy.

Pinochet has tried to slow the momentum of the opposition by creating a commission to propose rules for bringing back political parties and the Congress and for holding elections. Opposition leaders, however, are criticizing the lack of a provision to accelerate the current timetable for restoring democracy in 1989.

Government officials are disturbed by the opposition's increasing cohesion and boldness. Pinochet is seeking to appease military and cabinet officials who believe some liberalization is necessary to maintain social peace.

Comment: The President appears to be holding plans in reserve for more significant concessions. He probably intends to use them in coping with the massive protests expected around 11 September.

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